Late Immersion Foundation Document

Teachers and Administrators

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Late Immersion Foundation Document

Teachers and administrators

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Administrators	✓
Counsellors	✓
General public	
Parents	
Students	
Teachers	✓

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Foreword

The aim of this document is to give teachers and administrators the contextual and pedagogical tools for the late immersion program. It acts as a guide for beginning and experienced teachers who need to update their knowledge regarding this program and its details. Furthermore, for many working in this area, it also confirms their daily practices as well as their successes.

This document, prepared for teachers and administrators, answers most frequently asked questions about late immersion. Among others, the following topics are addressed: historical background, rationale and philosophy, promotion and recruitment, definition of the clientele, myths and realities of French immersion, research as well as the academic trends and methodologies that support today's second-language education. Teachers will also find a section on pedagogy in late immersion.

Several suggestions for successfully teaching and learning French in late immersion are discussed. One section specifically deals with how to succeed during the first three months and how to manage the students' frustration. In this same section, other favourable conditions for success are presented. A roll-up chart also gives an overview of the objectives that students should have achieved by the end of the school year.

Finally, a glossary is presented at the end of the document. The italic words in boldface found within the text are defined in the glossary, which presents the words in alphabetical order, not in the order in which they appear in the document.

It should also be noted that quoted texts are identified in the following manner: **taken from** means that the text is cited word for word, **adapted from** means that the original version of the text was modified, and **translated and adapted from** means that the original text was translated, then modified. The names of certain authors have been added in parentheses should the reader want to learn more about the research they conducted. For the authors who are presented in this way, the page number where the quoted text can be found is also noted. Words within the text that have been borrowed from another language are italicized.

Enjoy your reading!

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Historical context

The late immersion program was first introduced in the Peel County Board of Education (now known as the Peel District School Board) in Brampton, Ontario, in 1971 (Reid 1981). The program is now offered in all the provinces except Saskatchewan. It usually begins in Grade 6 or Grade 7. In British Colombia, there are also programs that begin later, in Grade 9 or Grade 10 (adapted with permission from *Yes, You Can Help!*, p. 27). In Alberta, seven school jurisdictions offer the late immersion program (adapted from Late French Immersion in Alberta, March 2005).

In 1977, Edmonton Public Schools established late immersion in Edmonton, Alberta (Evaluation of the Late French Immersion Program, 1982). This program was abandoned in the early 1980s and re-established at the end of the 1990s. In a letter written in 1985, James Jones, Supervisor, Second Languages for Edmonton Public Schools, wrote:

> The program began in three schools in 1977–1978 in order to provide an immersion opportunity for students who had missed the kindergarten/grade 1 beginning. It was intended as an interim program only. In two of the schools it phased out as the Early Immersion Program reached grade 4. In the third school, however, it continued successfully for several years until the size and success of the Early Immersion Program left no available classrooms. Although there was still a viable market the program was phased out beginning in 1982–1983.

In 1978, late immersion was first introduced in Calgary (Calgary Public).[1] However, it is difficult to know the exact number of students enrolled in late immersion because the number of students counted also included those in early immersion. In 1982, Canadian Parents for French published the number of students in Alberta schools and in schools in other provinces for the first time. In January 2005, Alberta's late immersion program had approximately 1500 students in grades 6 through 8. Although late immersion shares a number of similarities with early immersion, there are also differences, such as:

1. Parents decide to register their children in an early immersion program, while it is often the students themselves who decide, with their parents' support, to enter a late immersion program.
2. Grade 5 and 6 teachers have often recommended that late immersion students continue their studies in the late immersion program.
3. Several school districts have admission criteria for late immersion students, thus allowing them to select the students entering the program.

For these various reasons and for several years, most late immersion students were seen as having excellent academic achievement and being motivated to learn French as a second language. It should be noted that the clientele changes constantly, and it would be a mistake to assume that today all the students are motivated and have excellent academic achievement.

[1] We could not find any information of Late Immersion for the Catholic system.

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Why was late immersion created?

(The following text is adapted from the Late French Immersion March 2005 report)

In Alberta, as in the other provinces that offer late immersion, the program exists for the following reasons:

1. To satisfy the needs of parents who prefer that their children have a solid foundation in English as a ***mother tongue***[2] or as an additional language before they undertake the French immersion program, which appears to occur among some new immigrants (Swain and Lapkin 2005).
2. To enable those children who did not have the opportunity to start early immersion to enter the late immersion program. For example, children who arrived in a school district later can register in late immersion.
3. To respond to the needs of parents who prefer to wait until their children are old enough and mature enough to make the decision to learn a second language themselves.

There may be other reasons, such as the fact that some parents decide to register their children in late immersion in order to change schools or school districts, especially if their children have had bad scholastic or social experiences at the neighbourhood school. School bus transportation, the accessibility of the program and the number of students in the program are also determining factors. In some cases, parents opt for late immersion because there are fewer students per class. They feel that their children will get more help and that the program will be adjusted to satisfy their needs, particularly if there are problems. Finally, regardless of the school board, late immersion entails offering additional challenges and a different option to parents and students.

Rationale

(The following text is translated from *Français—Immersion tardive 6 et 7—Ensemble de ressources intégrées*, 1999, and used with the permission of British Columbia's Ministry of Education.)

Late immersion enables a student to learn French and feel at ease in situations where French is used.

Learning French in late immersion gives students the opportunity to:

- acquire the knowledge, learning processes, abilities and attitudes necessary for effective and confident communication in French
- acquire the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the French language through its cultural environments in order to better understand French-speaking communities and their cultures, as well as their own culture and those of others
- acquire the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of written, oral and visual works by Francophones
- explore their potential in matters relating to language learning, critical thinking and self-expression.

The late immersion program gives students the **language proficiency** they will need to continue in the French immersion program in senior high school (grades 10, 11 and 12). When students finish high school studies in immersion, they can pursue their studies in French at a post-secondary institution or accept employment in a bilingual work environment where their French skills will be an advantage.

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[2] Mother tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood. It is possible also that students learnt two or more languages simultaneously. Adapted July 17, 2008 from the Statistic Canada website. < http://www.statcan.gc.ca/concepts/definitions/language-lan, ue-engl.html#al >

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Philosophy of late immersion

A philosophy is a way of seeing the world and the things that surround us. The late immersion philosophy is different from that of early immersion because the two programs do not offer students the same scholastic experience. Different benchmarks for late immersion are presented in the following section.

Program overview

(The following text is adapted from the < Handbook for French Immersion Administrators >, 2002.)

The late immersion program is different from the early immersion program.

There are fewer late immersion programs than there are early immersion programs. They are also different. Students entering late immersion have not all had the same experiences learning French before joining the program. Some have had a few hours a week of French as a second language (FSL) classes, some have had intensive French classes and others have had no French classes at all. In general, students who enter late immersion received their primary education in English. Although there are more and more ***allophones*** in the immersion classes, the majority of students entering late immersion were educated in English.

The clientele is varied. Late immersion students come from different environments and cultures and speak different languages. Some students, including new entrants, have not acquired prior knowledge pertaining to the content and the language, and this presents additional challenges for their teachers. The teachers must henceforth take into account the youngsters' various skills and evaluate them accordingly. There are also more and more students with special needs, such as gifted children or children with learning difficulties. However, learning difficulties are discovered well before the student begins late immersion so that the teacher can prepare properly, and parents, administrators, resource people and students can make a well-informed decision about entering the program.

Late immersion students at the beginning of the year

Late immersion students will be more stressed and frustrated than students in other language programs. The first months can be difficult and the days more demanding because students have to learn French in their core subjects. They will search for the words to express themselves, they will always have to be alert in class and their homework will take longer to complete. They will often have new friends. They will have no control over their environment, and they will feel lost. It is essential for teachers, administrators, parents and students to really understand this stage of late-immersion learning. Students will therefore need a lot of support.

Prior knowledge

Most of the late immersion students have already acquired language proficiency in the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in their mother tongue. In general, they also have learning and problem-solving strategies that they acquired in elementary school. They have oral and written linguistic skills, which can be frustrating for some if they have not attained the same level in French. They also have to succeed in a fairly advanced general academic program (compared to elementary school) where the content requires more demanding cognitive work. They must therefore learn French in an effective manner.

French language development

As in early immersion, emphasis must be placed on learning French when students begin the late immersion program. However, concentration on French in late immersion is essential, especially

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during the first year, because the students must learn the language quickly. Teachers working with this clientele must place great importance on the development of second-language ***literacy*** through the content of their subjects. As soon as the students begin to learn the language, they will rapidly make progress learning French.

Late immersion students quickly acquire a "survival" language; they then acquire vocabulary and grammar in all the school subjects, such as French, mathematics, social studies and the sciences. If the emphasis is placed on learning French in the first few months, the students will be able to communicate and work in French in the other subjects. After a very intensive period of learning French, which generally lasts two years, they will often rejoin early or regular immersion classes, so they should have developed their language proficiency sufficiently.

Late immersion teachers and administrators

The work of teachers and administrators is very important in late immersion. In order to help the students achieve greater success, teachers and administrators are encouraged to learn more about second-language acquisition and the subject of second-language and additional language education in the context of late immersion. They must understand that people learn a language by practising it.

In the classroom, teachers can use various visual and auditory tools. In the very beginning, students will listen and understand the language; then they will speak, write and read it. It should be noted that in the beginning, the emphasis is placed on listening and speaking; reading and writing are introduced afterward. However, this introduction can be made progressively from the beginning of the first week. The four skills must be developed in unison, but in the beginning the emphasis is on listening and speaking.

As mentioned above, most students have already acquired a solid foundation in English or in their mother tongue before entering French immersion. If a reflective practice based on French language teaching is used, the transfer of skills and strategies will occur more easily. However, these strategies are not necessarily acquired in an explicit way. This is, therefore, an approach that teachers can use: in other words, they can openly discuss learning strategies with their students. (See Appendix 3: Teaching a strategy explicitly.)

Teamwork

Teachers would benefit from working as a team to promote the development of their young immersion students' French language skills. All the teachers, including those who teach subjects other than French, could plan the first few months together so that language learning is emphasized. It will then be easier to continue teaching the subject as such because the students will understand better and will be better at following instructions, participating in conversations, writing more complex texts and reading the instructions more quickly. All the late immersion teachers will therefore be working toward a common goal: teaching the students French so that they understand the material. During this initial period of learning French, the material (the content) will still be easy, allowing the students to concentrate more on the language (the form). Thus, while emphasis is also placed on form, the fundamental language for the sciences, mathematics and social studies will be taught through simple concepts. Later, when the students' language proficiency is more developed, they will be better equipped to apply themselves to the study of more complex content. Teaching French to understand the content is better than offering content that is too difficult. Consequently, the youngsters will not learn the material if it is too difficult because they will not have the language proficiency to do so.

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Promotion and recruitment

How to promote the program

School administrators as well as teachers have a significant role to play in promoting the late immersion program and in recruiting students. It is important to strongly encourage the late immersion program by explaining its advantages and implications. For example, we recommend explaining to parents and students that learning a second language:

1. helps develop, among others, cognitive and social skills
2. helps develop strategies to better understand the mother tongue
3. helps students learn other languages.

It is also important to explain to parents and students that having certain attitudes toward learning a second language is recommended, in particular:

1. being attentive and listening
2. wanting to learn and not being afraid to make mistakes
3. having good work habits, especially for doing homework.

For late immersion, more specifically:

1. Learning French will be intense and more important in the beginning so that the students learn the French language. If the content is simplified during the first few months, the students will have a chance to catch up later.
2. In a healthy environment, teachers will use different strategies to help the students understand little by little so that they feel at ease when they use the target language.

There are other implications as well. It is important to keep parents and students well informed about the challenges they may encounter.

1. The students' marks may be lower than they were in elementary school.
2. In the beginning, the students will probably be frustrated or worried.
3. Certain students may want to drop out or leave the program after a few weeks.

These reactions are normal. The school administration and the teachers must reassure parents and students with respect to these potential challenges. Individual meetings may be necessary in certain cases where the students have specific needs or the parents are overly worried.

Late immersion: is it for everyone?

Who might benefit by transferring to an English-speaking program? When? And who decides? In order to make the decision whether or not to transfer a student into the regular English program, all facets of the student's profile must be carefully examined. One of the criteria for success in learning a second language is the level of competence attained in one's first language (here, we are discussing a late immersion student and not one in a continuous immersion program). If the student already has difficulties reading and writing in his or her mother tongue, the same problems will come up in late immersion. It must also be determined whether or not the student is motivated or frustrated. Students with learning difficulties will have the same difficulties as in a regular program.

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What you need to know before registering or transferring a student with learning disabilities

Different factors must be considered before registering a student in late immersion or transferring a student into this program. Whatever the reasons may be, attention must be paid to the student's self-esteem. In the case of students with learning disabilities, there are three points that teachers and parents should consider before enrolling them in late immersion or transferring them into the program. First, the student's successes and failures in his or her mother tongue must be examined. Then, the student's perspicacity and motivation, and not those of the parents, must be examined to see if the student will remain in the program. Finally, students with learning disabilities can succeed in French immersion if unwarranted frustrations related to their learning condition are eliminated. Given that the emphasis is on listening and producing sounds, the students' hearing problems absolutely must be taken into account. Their experiences in learning a second language could prove to be much more difficult if they have a hearing problem. In such a case, a student will need additional help.

Definition of the clientele

To develop a teaching program and create an environment that responds to the needs of young adolescents, we must first understand these youngsters' characteristics, the changes they are undergoing and the effect that these can have on educational programs and activities.
(The preceding text is translated and adapted from the *Programme d'études. Français 7e à la 9e année. Immersion tardive*, p. 22, November 2002, with the permission of the Nova Scotia Department of Education.)

It is true that learning all the subjects in a second language is no small challenge! Students and parents can use the following factors to guide their decision:

- The desire to take risks and accept challenges is an invaluable asset in late immersion.
- Excellent, well-established work habits are very useful in late immersion.
- A great receptivity to change, a good tolerance for ambiguity and solid sense of humour are indispensable!
- Finally, we note the factors that may be the most important: the student's motivation, the parents' support and their desire to encourage their child.

(The preceding text is translated from the *Journal de l'immersion*, vol. 28, numéro 2. Printemps 2006, p. 9, with the permission of the Association canadienne des professeurs d'immersion.)

Profile of the adolescent learner

An adolescent's learning situation requires the teacher's careful consideration. It is important to understand the learner to be able to respond properly to his or her needs.

Adolescents:

- must feel secure
- appreciate humour (not sarcasm!)
- want to develop a good relationship with their teacher
- develop their sense of self
- do not want to feel different, must feel comfortable expressing themselves within a small group
- are easily distracted
- need to express themselves verbally
- like to contribute in small or large groups
- have a great need to socialize (friends)

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- are active—need to move
- look for a challenge (cognitive or personal)
- are really "into technology"; it is part of their daily life
- prefer informative/documentary texts
- are uncertain and often find transitions difficult
- want their independence
- are moody
- need frequent and immediate feedback
- want realistic learning situations in which they feel involved
- prefer hands-on experiences where they can touch things
- need to produce and create
- want to know the "why" of what they learn—what purpose will it serve in life?
- live in the "here and now."

(The preceding text is adapted from Rehorick, *French Is a Life Skill*, 1E. © 2007 Nelson Education Ltd. <http://www.cengage.com/permissions>.)

Teachers can take into account these descriptions of adolescents, but they must remember that every youngster has individual characteristics and invaluable qualities that must be exploited.

Myths and realities of French immersion

(The following text is adapted from CBE's French Immersion Task Force [chaired by Anthony Wall]. Final Report, 1999, with the permission of CBE.)

Introduction

We often have preconceived notions about what second-language learning is. These preconceived notions frequently come from our own life experiences. The way in which we learned a second language will often affect the manner in which we teach it, unless we deconstruct our prior understandings and acquire new ones. We also have preconceived notions because we hear or read about controversial subjects or we believe that something is "normal" because everyone is doing it. All teachers know that each group they work with will be different. Hence all the knowledge we have, whether it is a myth or an idea we read about somewhere, must be put in context and examined from a critical point of view. Being critical means asking questions and understanding that every context (place, time, experience, activity) is unique and different.

The following section presents some myths about learning French in late immersion that often circulate. In 1999, the Calgary Board of Education decided to identify myths about French immersion. The following represents an adapted version of some of the results found by the group that worked on the myths and realities (CBE's French Immersion Task Force [chaired by Anthony Wall], 1999)

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MYTH	FACTS
1. (a) **French immersion is only for students with excellent academic achievement.** It is a myth that immersion is difficult and that only the best have access to it.	Researcher Fred Genesee (1987) notes that children who could be at a disadvantage in immersion have shown the same linguistic development in their mother tongue and the same academic achievement as children who are disadvantaged in English-speaking environments. Students who have lower-than-average academic achievement have achieved the same oral proficiency and oral comprehension levels as students who have above-average academic achievement.
(b) **French immersion offers enough enrichment for students who need to be challenged.**	It is important to note that gifted children need as many level-appropriate learning opportunities in late immersion as they do in the regular program. Therefore it is not enough to say that these children are in immersion: they will need challenges whether they are in immersion or not. Such students are not given more work but rather work that presents different cognitive challenges.
(c) **Immersion students do not have special needs.** (This myth follows the logic of 1. (a) Because we believe that only children with excellent academic achievement are in immersion, we forget that some children have specific needs.	Children with special needs, such as learning or behaviour problems, will succeed in immersion just as they will in the regular program, **assuming that they receive the necessary help, that is, the same help they would get in an English-language program** (*Yes, You Can Help!*, 1996).
(d) **Students should get help in French, if possible.**	Most special needs are not related to the language as such. As soon as the child learns strategies to respond to his or her special needs, these strategies can be transferred to the immersion program, thus to French (*Yes, You Can Help!*, 1996). It would be better to get help in French, but English resources can be used if necessary. Having special needs should not be a reason for a student to drop out of the French immersion program.
2. **Immersion is only for families that are socioeconomically well-off.**	When it first began at the end of the 1960s, immersion became known by word of mouth. Since the end of the 90s, this is no longer the case. In their 1985 study, Holobow, Chartrand and Lambert demonstrated that children from low-income families do as well on tests as students from higher-income families. There were no significant differences in the results. Other factors, such as the distance, cost and information circulating about immersion, could have given access to immersion to one population rather than another. These challenges can be easily resolved by the school boards.

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MYTH	FACTS
3. Parents who register their children in immersion have to know French so that they can do more to help their children. This myth puts a lot of pressure on the parents.	Better communication regarding learning a second language and the curriculum will certainly help to dispel this myth. Parents must understand that French immersion was created for students who have no knowledge of the French language. Schools should inform parents about this on a regular basis (*Yes, You Can Help!*, 1996).
4. Late immersion students benefit from the same advantages as early immersion students.	Erin Gibson, a student and graduate of the early immersion program, describes the difference between the two programs in this way: "When all the high school immersion students went to a French play, everyone understood the story and got the message, but the Early Immersion student enjoyed more of the jokes" (*Yes, You Can Help!*, 1997). This reality is more than a question of fluid proficiency. Early immersion students can learn a third or fourth language more easily than other students. The research shows that early and late immersion students have several advantages when they learn a second language, but early immersion students enjoy a greater number of advantages (Archibald et al. 2006).
5. French immersion students are at a disadvantage in English.	Several research projects show that immersion students succeed in mathematics, social studies and the sciences. Students in continuous immersion are as successful as the Anglophones. Immersion students transfer their skills from one language to the other (*Yes, You Can Help!*, 1997). Certain studies even note that immersion students have greater success than students in the regular program and even than those in English language arts (Turnbull, Lapkin and Hart 2001; Lapkin, Hart and Turnbull 2003).
6. Students with hearing problems should not attend immersion schools.	Some research shows that children with hearing problems do as well as other students in immersion. Children who have problems and are transferred to the regular program will lose their confidence and self-esteem. They will need support and resources to help meet their needs (Boissonneault 1999).
7. A French-speaking teacher knows enough about language learning to teach French in immersion.	Even though a teacher is proficient in French, he or she may not know how to teach immersion classes. Teachers must have training in second-language acquisition as well as in the pedagogical approaches associated with immersion. Teachers who have learned French as a second language will have teaching methods that are different from those used by teachers whose mother tongue is French. Teachers are still the best model for the students. Their proficiency in French must therefore be quite advanced.

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MYTH	FACTS
8. The French language is no longer important enough to learn.	After English, French is the most frequently learned second or foreign language. It is the official language of more than 33 countries and is the only language other than English to be spoken on five continents. French, like English, is truly an international language. It is one of Canada's and the United Nations' official languages.

Other myths

There is a myth that suggests that students in French immersion will be perfectly bilingual after Grade 12 (Handbook for French Immersion Administrators, 2002). This ideal is very difficult to attain. In fact, few people can attain ***equibilingualism***, which means that they can speak both English and French like native-born speakers (Roy 2008). We often forget to speak of bilingualism as being the ability to effectively, practically and appropriately use a language for communication of a personal, scholastic, social or professional nature (Genesee 2004). Because of this myth, students and teachers often throw in the towel when faced with the enormity of the work involved in trying to turn students into native-born speakers instead of developing a level of bilingualism that enables students to communicate in the two languages. We should rely more on the research that supports the fact that immersion students have multiple skills and sufficiently advanced functional proficiencies in French.

Another myth regarding second languages concerns motivation. The myth is as follows: If students are motivated and really want to learn the language, they will learn it. We have to pay attention because even the most highly motivated students can face great challenges when learning a language. For example, we have to consider the fact that the oldest students will never attain a native-speaker's proficiency, especially with respect to the accent and pronunciation. Motivation may also depend on learning and teaching styles. Each student will be motivated in a different way. The only thing that teachers can do is offer an environment in which the students can achieve success (Lightbown and Spada 2006).

Research[3]

Introduction

(The following text is adapted from the *Handbook for French Immersion Administrators*, 2002.)

Over the years, several researchers have worked to have a better understanding of immersion. According to the Canadian Education Association (1992), French immersion was the most studied program in the world and the most frequently cited model. In the early days, immersion was an experimental program, as the title *French Immersion: The Trial Balloon that Flew* (Lapkin, Swain and Argue, 1983) illustrates so well. This document was written for immersion students. It explained to them the reasons why immersion was a success and gave them ideas on how to maintain their French language skills.

Because of this program's experimental nature, several research projects were undertaken. Furthermore, in the beginning, the administrators, educational consultants and parents wanted proof that immersion

[3] This section will include a series of authors to whom teachers can refer for more in-depth reading. Certain ideas also come from "French Immersion: The Success Story Told by Research" by Nancy D. Halsall, for the French Immersion in Alberta: Building the Future conference, held in Edmonton on November 19 and 20, 1998.

worked. They wanted to know if the students suffered or not, if they learned French while still retaining their English language skills as did students registered in a regular English program. Today, several other language programs are opening their doors, but up until now, immersion was the most frequently studied program and its success is assured, even if there are still some areas that need improvement.

The following sections present a summary of the different studies that were conducted on this subject. It is important to know the context in which the research was conducted in order to better understand the results obtained, the theoretical approaches that guided the research and the mindset of the period. When immersion was first introduced, several studies compared unilingual children with children learning French in an immersion setting. It is now clear that bilingual children are not unilingual and that comparing them to unilingual children presents enormous challenges. The psycholinguists (authors) show that students who learn languages use their cognitive skills differently from unilingual students. Teachers must take into account the students' multiple linguistic, cultural and social skills (Cook 2001).

French language acquisition

(The following text is adapted from the *Handbook for French Immersion Administrators*, 2002.)

At the beginning of French immersion, we wanted to know if the students would learn French and how they would do so. Because the French immersion programs do not all allocate the same number of hours to French, acquisition of the French language will be difficult to evaluate according to the time spent on French and the way in which it is taught. Several research projects confirm one fact: French language skills develop in accordance with the number of hours dedicated to learning the language (Archibald et al. 2006). The students who received the most hours of teaching in French had the higher results. The early immersion students had better results in different subjects than the late immersion students and those who started in middle school (Day and Shapson 1989; Edwards 1989; Harley 1987; Swain and Lapkin 1986; Wesche 1996). The early immersion students had better results in communication and oral comprehension and were more confident in their use of French. The early immersion students' academic achievement was more consistent.

Immersion students have good linguistic abilities in French, but their results are poorer in comparison to those whose mother tongue is French (Genesee 1978; Holobow, Genesee Lambert and Chartrand 1987). The latter are better in oral and written communication. It should be noted that bilingual children will not have the same results as children who have only one language to learn. In 2008, it may be necessary to compare the bilingual child's results to the results of other bilingual children and not to native-born speakers' results. Furthermore, Mougeon, Rehner and Nadasdi (2005) show that immersion students should learn more everyday language. These authors give pedagogical suggestions for accomplishing this and suggest that immersion students have more contact with native-born speakers.

English language acquisition and school subjects

(The following text is adapted from the Handbook for French Immersion Administrators, 2002.)

When immersion first began, Anglophone parents were concerned and wanted to know whether their children would learn English or if English would be compromised (Halsall 1998). Several research projects examined this issue (Edwards 1989; Lambert and Tucker 1972).

The researchers discovered that the students had not acquired all the grade 1 to 3 English language skills in comparison to students whose mother tongue was English. This discrepancy disappeared in grade 4 or 5, depending on the number of hours of instruction they received in English (Edwards 1989). This research compared children whose mother tongue was English with children who had mastered several languages.

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Some researchers found that the early immersion students had greater success in reading and vocabulary than those in middle immersion. This reality shows that immersion students improve their English competencies over a long period of time. Several researchers also concluded that immersion students learn school subjects as well as they would if they were in a regular English language program (Genesee 1987; Lapkin, Swain and Argue 1983; Bournot-Trites and Tallowitz 2002).

The research revealed that late immersion students did not suffer any delays with respect to their English language competencies (Halpern, MacNab, Kirby and Tuong 1976). New research confirms the observations made in the 1970s and 1980s (Fine 1992; McVey, Bonyun, Dicks and Dionne, 1990).

Recent research

Authors working in the cognitive domain henceforth recognize the differences among learners. Languages are learned differently at different levels by different individuals in different contexts (Van Patten and Williams 2007). Openness to the previous personal experiences of language learners is also very important from a sociocultural point of view. Working in groups helps students develop their knowledge (Wells 1999; Swain and Lapkin 2005). Research into immersion continues to flood in. This research deals with, among other things, the assessment of the students' linguistic skills (Turnbull, Hart and Lapkin 2003), the correction of errors and a pedagogy that balances form and meaning (Lyster 2004, 2007), reading (Bournot-Trites 2007) and writing (Kristmanson, Dicks, LeBouthillier and Bourgoin 2008). There are also immersion graduates' personal stories (Mandin 2008). On a more practical level, Dagenais, Armand, Walsh and Maraillet (2008) introduced the idea of language awareness activities in immersion classes that would raise the students' and teachers' awareness of their diverse linguistic and cultural realities. To accomplish this, they present educational activities that encourage children to think critically about their own reality and that of others. Numerous studies thus continue to examine French immersion in Canada and elsewhere within changing contexts (De Courcy, Warren and Burston 2002; Stakhnevich 2005).

Late or early immersion?

We increasingly hear that late French immersion students are better than early French immersion students or can become as competent in French as early immersion students. As mentioned earlier, several studies show that students who have the greatest contact with French have higher academic achievement. To a certain extent, late immersion students can catch up to early immersion students, particularly in the area of writing. Some studies showed that the differences between late and early immersion students can disappear in university. However, we realize that results must be carefully examined because, as stated in this document, late immersion may attract a different clientele (Turnbull et al. 2001; Wesche 1996). Early immersion is still the most accessible program for students, and the outcome specific to a group of students will always depend on different factors, such as the quality of the French language instruction (Genesee 2004).

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Academic trends and methodological approach

Cognitive approach or emphasis on form?

Several academic and methodological trends have emerged in recent years. The methodologies, such as the structural or audiolingual methods, have not helped students to communicate in real situations. The use of lists of out-of-context words, the conjugation of verbs and spelling exercises that have no connection to the students' reality do little to help students speak the second language. The cognitive approach seemed to provide more interesting solutions. There have been different variations of this approach, such as the gestural approach or Total Physical Response.

In the 1980s, Krashen had a huge influence on second-language learning (Lightbown and Spada 2006). This author often cited French immersion as an example in order to prove that if students hear French and do everything in French during the day, they will learn French naturally. Hence we have long believed that in French immersion, it was better not to study the language or to speak of it as such. We relied on communicative language teaching where the language is treated mainly as a communication tool and not as a goal in and of itself. During the 1980s, Canale and Swain proposed different components of communicative competence:

1. Grammatical competence: knowledge of the linguistic code
2. Sociolinguistic competence: knowledge of sociocultural rules and rules of speech
3. Strategic competence: knowledge of communication strategies.

The authors thus suggest that we rely on the linguistic code and on acquiring the skills needed for assembling the language's elements into coherent texts. They also suggest teaching students how and when to use the language appropriately and how to use strategies to resolve communication problems (Canale and Swain 1981).

For several years and pursuant to the "***focus on form***" studies (emphasis on the language's form or the grammar), researchers have suggested dealing more with the language when teaching the content, especially in subjects such as the sciences, mathematics and social studies. Emphasizing the form means that the teacher plans to deal with the structure of the language in order to help students take note of its forms. This step can be taken before or after students have used the grammatical forms. Lyster (2007) proposes a pedagogy that balances form and meaning (counterbalanced instruction). For example, if the teacher in one class emphasizes the language (as form), the students could benefit from more activities related to topics or material requiring them to use the second language to accomplish communication tasks or to participate in them. If in another class, the teacher never deals with the language's form, he or she may be doing this to make the students think about the forms they produce correctly or incorrectly, always within a pedagogical context. This pedagogy thus stipulates that we must do a little more of what we don't often do: emphasize form when we almost never do so or put less emphasis on form and more on practice, depending on the class context.

Sociocultural theory and socioconstructivism

More and more researchers are basing their work on sociocultural theory and socioconstructivism in education and second-language instruction in order to better define the current reality of the classroom. Socioconstructivism suggests that we build our new understandings from the knowledge we already have. Students who adopt this theory take their own learning in hand and learn to resolve problems, to be critical and to make concrete changes in their lives on a daily basis (from whence the student-centred approach and the research-inquiry) (also see Alberta Education document, *Focus on Inquiry*, 2005).

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"Socio-" in socioconstructivism signifies a larger social dimension. We build our ideas and our knowledge with others in a specific historical, social and cultural context.

Sociocultural theory allegedly came from Vygotsky (1978). According to this author, thought and language are interrelated. The "***zone of proximal development***" is indubitably Vygotsky's most well-known theory: it refers to the distance between what students know and what they will be able to accomplish with the help of a more experienced person. For the second-language learner, the evolution of the connectivity between thought and language is slower to develop, and this creates a challenge for both students and teachers. The students and the teacher must have the opportunity to interact in order to build knowledge and to clarify and negotiate meaning, words and contexts. In this way, they clarify their communication strategies. Students develop the language and learn the content through collaborative work (problem resolution, language manipulation, negotiation).

To give an example, Swain and Lapkin (2005) demonstrated that, according to sociocultural theory, students build their knowledge by working together. These researchers put the students in a group and asked them to resolve problems. They noticed that the students negotiated not only the content but also the form of the language. They also noted that when the students work in a group, the use of the first language could be an asset at a cognitive level, particularly when the tasks are advanced from a cognitive point of view. Nevertheless, attention must be paid so that English is not used all the time; students should learn French so that they can complete advanced cognitive tasks. Turnbull (2003) notes that 5% of English should be sufficient and that depends on the situation.

Cognitive research

Late immersion students who start to learn French cannot immediately work in a group or acquire knowledge in the target language because their language skills are not extensive enough. The cognitive research reveals three types of ***knowledge (declarative, procedural and conditional)*** that are represented differently in the memory but are interrelated. They thus require different teaching and learning strategies. With respect to learning a second language, the researchers conducting cognitive studies observed that if the teacher controls the knowledge when learning begins and has the students do repetitions, they acquire the language automatically (long-term acquisition) (Van Patten 2004). The teaching must offer a balance between explicit and implicit learning because they complete one another. In fact, for explicit learning to be effective, students must have the opportunity to learn implicitly and vice versa. Teachers must explicitly speak of the language and its system and explicitly teach vocabulary and expressions so that the students encode these new elements in the long term. The new input is then registered in the implicit pathways of the memory's mechanisms. So that it can be remembered and repeated, a wide variety of cognitive contexts organized around the new input transpose it to the explicit domain of the training (Ellis 2005). The outcome of a rich contextual and cognitive practice will be permanent acquisition, where usage becomes automatic. We must look at the systematic teaching of formulas in the same way: these expressions are formulaic, often idiomatic, sequences that are essential for starting and facilitating communication and satisfying socio-emotional needs. During the first months, students are unable to analyze their structure or to integrate the individual elements into other combinations, but they are able to memorize them as phonological entities. They integrate them as such into the language that they are learning to construct with the help of grammar rules. Myles, Mitchell and Hooper (1999) state that these formulas, once assimilated, serve as models. The formulas stimulate their implicit brain processes. Implicitly, students start to analyze the units and to isolate elements within them that are then used in creative new constructions governed by the rules. Researchers working in intensive French have appropriated these theories, showing that repetition and modelling are very important (Netten and Germain 2004). During her teaching career, Csorba (2008), who taught in Alberta for over 15 years, also demonstrated the beneficial effect of this practice. She noted that in the beginning of late immersion, the controlled teaching of formulas combined with teaching high-frequency fundamental language governed by the rules of grammar generally accelerates acquisition and

improves oral expression. In her article, she gives concrete examples that are reproduced later (see the sections "How to succeed during the first three months" and "Details of an overview of the approximate progress during the first year in late immersion").

Sociolinguistics

Second language studies are focused largely on the cognitive level (how we learn the language) and on social interactions (what happens when we learn a language in a group). An increasing amount of research also examines the language's social role. Why do people speak different linguistic variants? Why do people switch codes? Why do some languages have more power than others? Sociolinguistic research informs teachers, students and parents about the social issues related to the second language. Students already have preconceived notions about the language, and they have different cultural and personal experiences. These perceptions can influence the reasons that prompt them to learn a second language and the way they go about it. Teachers and students can ask themselves the following questions:

1. Are there negative or positive comments circulating in the school concerning the language?
2. Are there students who are considered better, and why?
3. Who seems to control class discussions, and why?
4. What is your perception of immersion? Thinking that immersion students are wasting their time may affect your teaching.
5. How did you learn French? Your experiences will affect your current progress with French.

These questions can give teachers a better understanding of the social context in which students learn languages, and can influence their teaching (Pellerin and Roy 2008).

Conclusion

The current academic and methodological trends are not perfect models for teaching French in a late immersion class, nor are they the only way of thinking or doing things. They can guide teachers and answer some of their questions about how students learn a language and the manner in which they build their identity with others. The teacher will be able to use a series of methods without resorting to a traditional mode where the students listen and absorb what the teacher says. If the teacher spends more than half the time talking during a language class, particularly in late immersion, this means that more than half of the students have not spoken a word. Such a method goes against the communicative approach (we learn by speaking) and the cognitive and sociocultural research (students build knowledge through interaction and by starting with what they already know). When the teacher has the floor, the students will not be able to express themselves.

Pedagogy

Certain pedagogical concepts can be adapted to all programs. Before dealing with late immersion pedagogy, we will look at second-language pedagogy in general.

Pedagogy of teaching a second language

Bearing in mind the current academic trends in teaching and learning and the methodological approaches, we will examine the principal ideas that underlie a second-language pedagogy and how these ideas can help us improve the way we teach French.

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Aim: To communicate

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Whichever academic trend is advocated, the principal goal of learning a second language is communication. It is better to do so in an environment where authentic communication is central to all language activity: in other words, teachers must offer their students opportunities to communicate, interact and speak in real situations where there is a message to transmit.

Input and the zone of proximal development

(The following text is translated and adapted from *L'immersion en français au Canada: guide pratique d'enseignement*, 2004, with the permission of CAIT.)

In order to be excellent language models for their students, teachers must provide understandable input. This must be done without recourse to English but with the help of context, using explanations in recognizable language, negotiation and nonverbal clues. Teachers must adapt what they say to their students' proficiency level by speaking clearly—sometimes even by speaking slowly. They often repeat certain important words or expressions, clarifying and giving examples, so that the students acquire what they have learned. During this preliminary stage, as in all learning, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development is important and is understood as the potential level that students can attain with the help of an expert (either the teacher or a more advanced student) (Vergnaud 2000).

If the teachers' language ***input*** is understandable and offered in a wide variety of contexts, the students can reuse it in oral and written activities. At this stage, the teachers act as the students' language models. They model the language orally, and the students repeat and enrich their vocabulary and grammar through constant practice. The teachers' contributions must be comprehensible, interesting, personalized and significant, and they must present a scaffolded cognitive challenge (compare, contrast, justify, analyze, create, invent, etc.) to encourage the production of language in a realistic way.

An interaction

(The following text is translated and adapted from *L'immersion en français au Canada: guide pratique d'enseignement*, 2004, with the permission of CAIT.)

While the teacher models the language and the students listen and repeat at the same time, he or she must also create conditions that promote interaction. For example, the teacher can:

- ask the students open-ended questions and encourage them to answer
- incorporate their comments and repeat them
- repeat, reformulate and paraphrase
- enrich and elaborate.

The teacher must also negotiate the meaning of the language with the students. In the learning context, a student develops a multitude of strategies for understanding, without recourse to a dictionary or formal explanations. These strategies must be discussed with the students and demonstrated by the teacher. (See Appendix 3: Teaching a strategy explicitly.) For example, the teacher shows the student that nonverbal clues such as gestures and intonation can be used to understand and to be understood. The teacher can:

- ask for explanations
- verify comprehension

- negotiate form
- suggest a word or structure.

Output (Practice makes perfect!)

(The following text is translated and adapted from *L'immersion en français au Canada : guide pratique d'enseignement*, 2004, with the permission of CAIT.)

To learn a language, you must use it. While the teacher offers models of grammatical structures and often uses them in a repetitive manner, the students repeat them as well. They must therefore be given frequent and calculated opportunities to express themselves in a variety of learning situations. Teachers must encourage their students to use only French to communicate with their classmates, and they can also help students with the pronunciation of words and symbols (Cogswell 2008).

Private speech or talking to yourself

Students in immersion often use their mother tongue, with which they are more familiar, to make connections with the language they are learning. They use private speech (in other words, they talk quietly to themselves in English or in another language) to make connections, especially during more complicated cognitive activities. This **private speech** must be permitted, but students must also be given the language tools they need to discuss more complex cognitive activities ***in French***. Otherwise students will do so in English.

Automatizing language structures

The students will use French to compare, analyze, create, invent, argue or resolve a problem if they have the linguistic skills to do so. The teacher must therefore take the time to give them phrases and expressions so that they can build their knowledge in the target language. Students must be allowed to "proceduralize" or automatize the appropriate linguistic structures. This way, they will implicitly learn the correct linguistic forms. Learning is an active process during which existing knowledge is added to or modified. So that their new knowledge is well established and reinforced, students must have a variety of learning experiences; they must also have the time necessary to proceduralize and receive the pertinent feedback as quickly as possible.

Second language teaching strategies

How to take prior knowledge into account

To make learning relevant to the students, we must ask them to make associations with their prior knowledge through discussions, idea mapping or newspaper research. Because the research shows that there is also a link between the emotions and the meaning, teachers should integrate emotions into their curriculum in a productive way. This can be done with strategies such as writing a diary or improvising debates. The organization of the information into cognitive diagrams ("patterns") is another element that is essential in helping students establish meaning. The organization of information gives students a context that makes their learning experience more meaningful.

It is important to value the student's **personal experiences** and to integrate them into class plans to focus on the total involvement of the individual, as much on the cognitive and emotional levels as on the psychomotor level. Experience always influences present learning, and emotions are an integral part of learning, memorization and recall.

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Multiple intelligences and learning styles

Planning should take into account multiple intelligences (Gardner 1983) and different learning styles. In this way, teachers will include several techniques and strategies so that students benefit from a variety of linguistic experiences.

The differentiated approach or the adaptive dimension

To respond to all of the students' learning needs, teachers have to adapt and diversify the tasks and encourage each student to use various means to arrive at the same goal. This approach is defined as a methodology that implements a diversified set of teaching and learning tools and procedures so that the students attain the objectives via different pathways. It is also used in mainstreaming (*L'inclusion en immersion*, Alberta Education, 2007, p. 4).

Pedagogy centred on the task, the project and cooperation

Research on brain function supports the fact that teachers must make learning active, socio-interactive and meaningful. Needless to say, learning based on problems or projects encourages interdisciplinarity because it encourages students to create links among the knowledge, skills and attitudes they acquire in order to learn and develop competencies that they can transfer to their daily lives.

Pedagogy centred on the assignment or project makes it easier to use tasks that are demanding on the cognitive level. Naturally, the activities need to be authentic. It is also important to make sure that the students know what to do and that they have had a model before they begin. They must be given the language tools before starting the work or the group project. The students will use French if they know sentences in French. The language is learned through participation in authentic communication activities that the student finds meaningful.

The use of cooperative structures encourages the collaborative development of cognitive and linguistic skills. Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy that consists of having students work together (Abrami et al. 1996). In order to develop more autonomy, the students are assigned brief cooperative tasks, which are modelled and well structured, giving them the chance to experience the language in authentic communication with others.

Learning centres

Teachers may want to stage activities in the form of learning centres. The students can thus use their skills in different situations: a listening centre, a centre using technology, a centre for reading aloud (the teacher can lead a group reading activity and read more complex texts; the teacher is there to help with the French), writing a single (but complex) text such as a poem, post card or comic strip.

Integrating technology

Integrating technology into our daily teaching has become essential. Late immersion teachers can find all sorts of resources on the Web. Audio and video technologies are also useful for language teachers (Willetts 1992). The integration of technology into daily teaching can be accomplished through computer-assisted teaching. Using software programs, teachers can present the students with new knowledge in small units or give them problems to solve. Teachers can also encourage their students to do word processing and to use data banks, computerized books or educational games. Technology can be used to transmit knowledge and help the students do research, organize and process information in French.

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We can also integrate technology by allowing the students to film each other, record a story on tape (that only the teacher will listen to), film interviews or participate in a round-table discussion. Of course these ideas must be prepared in advance. The texts have to be written and the teacher has to correct them. The students also have to practise reading their texts and even learn them by heart before using the technology. The integration of technology can go even further: virtual meetings can be organized with French speakers or with students from the same group. The sky's the limit!

Reading and writing

As soon as the late immersion students begin to read and write French, the teacher explains that they do not have to grasp the meaning of every word they read. The important thing is that their comprehension level is adequate for the task at hand. The teacher will help the student take a step back from the text and find external elements that can improve comprehension (title, subtitles, images). The teacher will also show that the context is useful for understanding the meaning of a word.

With respect to writing, it is by reading and writing that students will learn to write (see also *Écrire au primaire* by Yves Nadon 2007, who offers interesting ideas about writing). In late immersion, writing can be a challenge for students. The teacher can therefore use different types of texts, some easy and some more difficult. Having peers review the writing is also an effective technique for improving these skills. Writing must also be done for different audiences. The teacher can use the following steps to guide the students in their writing exercises:

- choosing the information or ideas
- arranging the information or ideas
- preparing the first draft
- revising (spelling, sentence structure, punctuation, grammar corrections)
- fine-tuning and publication.

Teaching the language also means teaching the culture

Language and culture are inseparable. In other words, students must learn to recognize the cultural influences related to French with respect to patterns of conduct, thought and self-expression. They simultaneously learn to develop their own cultural identity as immersion students. We increasingly find children in late immersion classes who come from other cultures and speak other languages. These students often speak two, three or four languages and have different cultural referents. These differences give the class opportunities to practise respect for others and celebrate diversity and also to learn other ways of thinking and doing things. As a former French immersion student said, "The program gave me a place to be myself and to call home, I am a French Immersion person, my identity is not with a culture, it is a culture" (Mueller 2008, p. 39).

Developing critical thinking

Late immersion students have knowledge and ideas about the world of today. While we bear in mind the different techniques for language teaching, we must also remember that these students live in an international community where conflicts occur. Education through projects or tasks should also encourage these students to develop critical thinking and an openness to the world around them. Topics related to everyday life, power, politics and interpersonal and international relations are not limited to social studies; they touch on everyday realities. They can be discussed

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in French during projects, while reading newspapers and during debates that can be recorded or filmed.

Fundamental principles of late immersion

(The following text is translated and adapted from *Programme d'études. Français 7e à la 9e année. Immersion tardive*, November 2002, with the permission of the Nova Scotia Department of Education.)

While bearing in mind the pedagogy of a second language, the following paragraphs deal in particular with late immersion.

Teacher input

In late immersion, **French is the language used for teaching and communicating** in the classroom. The teacher is the primary language model. It is therefore important that the teacher use an excellent level of language.

Here are a few bits of advice for doing this:

- Use clear and conventional language:
  - To facilitate understanding, use complete sentences explaining one thought at a time.
  - Speak at a normal pace, not too quickly.
  - Avoid unknown terms or expressions if the situation does not justify their use.
  - Teach the vocabulary and expressions that facilitate comprehension.
- Give many clues to facilitate comprehension:
  - Give visual clues: objects or images such as posters, signs or illustrations related to the topics of the lessons.
  - Teach in an animated fashion, using facial expressions and gestures and playing with intonation.
  - Use synonyms or paraphrases.
- In particular, check often to see if the students do not understand and what they do not understand.
- The teacher can also build on what the students already know in their mother tongue, finding French and English words that resemble each other. Adopt a variety of questioning techniques:
  - Questions about the process
    - Ask questions that make the students think about the way in which they arrived at such a response. These questions cause the students to use language for thought.
    - Ask questions that require creativity and critical reasoning.
    - Have the students ask questions.

Development of students' oral skills

The development of the students' oral skills is extremely important, especially at the beginning of late immersion. Oral skills must be the focus from the first few weeks on so that the student learns French, even if it means putting aside certain elements of the subjects' content. With permission from the parents and administrators, the teacher can allow a certain flexibility with respect to the prescribed curriculum. To develop the students' oral language, the teacher can:

- create authentic communication situations
- find and exploit the students' areas of interest
- develop the language needed to complete the communication project

- give the students opportunities to talk to different groups of people (another class, teachers, French-speaking guests, etc.)
- let the students speak:
  - give the students time to express themselves often and to actively take part in meaningful discussions,
  - plan role-playing situations, question-and-answer periods and discussions led by the students
- encourage the students to express themselves using whole sentences that you have previously modeled
- encourage the students to make themselves understood:
  - suggest that the students use any means possible, without using the English language, especially:
    - gestures
    - synonyms or paraphrases
    - a drawing
    - lists of words or instructions posted in class
    - technology to record or film the students
- negotiate the meaning: process that helps the student negotiate and understand the message when talking with others.

Linguistic content in all learning situations

(The following text is translated from *L'immersion en français au Canada: guide pratique d'enseignement*, 2004, with the permission of CAIT.)

The teacher can carefully plan the linguistic content of all the learning situations and start the year slowly to establish a good linguistic foundation. To begin, the teacher can:

- help the students understand that they already have knowledge (in other languages, and perhaps even in French); encourage them to establish links with this knowledge without assuming that they have all the vocabulary in their mother tongue
- help the students to learn a certain number of absolutely essential grammatical and syntactic structures and to use them; then use them to create model structures that will be used in new contexts
- from the beginning, teach the students the vocabulary they need to communicate with clarity and precision during the daily activities undertaken in class and in everyday life
- use the classroom walls to remind the students of the most essential vocabulary; as students progress, updates need to be done on a continual basis
- encourage the students to quickly start using all kinds of reference works, including electronic resources, bilingual dictionaries, etc., to respond to their needs and satisfy their curiosity
- encourage the students to take advantage of the valuable resources found on the Internet for vocabulary research and oral and written work
- encourage the students to actively participate in discussions so that they can verify the hypotheses concerning the meaning and usage of the structures they hear.

Integration of subject matter and vocabulary

(The following text is translated from *L'immersion en français au Canada: guide pratique d'enseignement*, 2004, with the permission of CAIT.)

In immersion, the integration of subject matter is essential in order to explore the language in the most explicit way possible. We can integrate different components of the language such as writing and oral expression, but we can also integrate different subject matter such as mathematics, social studies, the sciences and technology. Furthermore, teachers, working as a team, can save time by integrating subject matter.

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Integration of linguistic components

- Integrating oral and written expression:
  - Use writing in situations where terms are presented orally and viceversa. Students have to learn to speak first. Then, while presenting writing skills, the teacher can speak clearly about the differences between the two levels of language. For example, if the students learned to say "vous" out loud, they will be less inclined to pronounce the "s" when they read the word, hence the importance of teaching students to speak the language first.
  - Do prereading activities that will enable the students to use the language orally before reading.
    - Think out loud:
      - enables the students to hear
    - Shared reading
    - Use technological resources to vary the approaches.

Teachers, as much as possible, do not limit themselves to integrating subjects where the emphasis is on a topic that touches on certain elements of the subjects' content. Instead, they focus on skills and attitudes. Unlike content components, skills and attitudes can be transferred from one context to another. This transfer from one situation to another helps the students understand that there are general skills and knowledge that can be reused, no matter what the topic or subject is. By calling on the students' metacognition, teachers help them to develop strategies that facilitate the transfer and to learn in which situations they will find these strategies useful. In planning a subject, whether it is French or another school subject, teachers can:

- carefully plan their lesson in order to help integrate French into a subject; select the vocabulary and structures that the students must know in order to understand
- present these words and structures in advance and throughout the activity, for example, in the following ways:
  - by showing tangible objects or illustrations of these terms
  - by integrating these expressions into vignette activities
  - by frequently repeating the words and structures during the activity
  - by making reference books available to the students and showing them several French Web sites that are relevant to the subject and use relatively simple terminology.
- empower the students to acquire vocabulary; for example, a group of students can get together to study a page on a difficult subject and then teach the vocabulary to the rest of the class
- form groups of "experts" who study one aspect of a subject being studied and then have these students explain it to the rest of the class.

Strategies for correcting errors

(The following text is translated from *L'immersion en français au Canada: guide pratique d'enseignement*, 2004, with the permission of CAIT.)

To ensure a balance between the spontaneity of expression and the precision of the language, teachers must act strategically and target the corrected errors through explicit teaching while still allowing a certain flexibility of expression. Depending on the circumstances and needs, students will concentrate more specifically on a relaxed form of communication or on using proper language.

Rather than trying to eliminate language errors in a traditional way, teachers should use the errors to study teaching strategies and create opportunities where students take risks, learn from each other and build their own knowledge. When students are able to use the proper structures orally, they are ready to use them in writing. Making mistakes is natural and is part of the learning process.

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The research clearly shows that exercises based on the repetitive application of grammatical rules are of little value to learning, especially if the rules are not taught within a context. We learn a language and its mechanisms best in a real and meaningful context and in an integrated fashion, not in isolated exercise lessons. Reformulation, repeating with the correct form what a student has said, is often used in immersion but is not, however, the best way to proceed. It is better if students become aware of their mistakes and are allowed to make the corrections themselves (Lyster 1999; Lyster and Ranta 1997).

Performance evaluation or rating

Teachers will establish guidelines and criteria for assigning marks and giving feedback on each student's performance. They can draw ideas from a large number of assessment tools, in particular:

Formal or informal observations of the student include:

- Work samples
- Anecdotal reports
- Student–teacher conferences
- Logbooks
- Questioning
- Interviews
- Rubrics or scoring keys (also see Alberta Assessment Consortium at <http://www.aac.ab.ca>)
- Checklists
- Role-playing
- Various essays
- Written and oral presentations
- Experimentation
- Illustrations
- Games
- Songs.

Students also play an essential role in the assessment process. They think about their progress and role in the learning process. Every late immersion student will learn French in a different way. Some will learn to speak more quickly while others will be better at writing. This will be the case in late immersion where allophones, for example, will already carry linguistic baggage in two languages. They will have already acquired strategies, or they will at least have a better understanding of the stress and insecurity associated with learning a second language. To adequately assess the students' work, teachers can choose different types of evaluations or performance ratings, such as the portfolio, self-evaluation or peer evaluation during group activities. These kinds of assessments, combined with more traditional methods, will give a better view of each student's progress.

The diary: Several studies also note the importance of diaries during second language learning. The students can start their diaries in English and gradually add French. Teachers can read about the progress of learning from their students' emotional and personal points of view. They can also ask them questions in French.

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Class environment

(The following text is translated from the *Programme d'études. Française 7e à la 9e année. Immersion tardive*, November 2002, with the permission of the Nova Scotia Department of Education.)

The class environment and climate has a significant influence on late immersion students. If they are to learn, a reassuring climate where they feel free to take linguistic risks must be created.

- The classroom atmosphere must be relaxed and welcoming.
- The students should feel encouraged and supported by the teacher and their peers.
  - Foster positive attitudes with respect to the climate in which learning takes place.
  - Show acceptance of all the students.
  - Treat the students' responses with respect.
  - Use communication techniques such as eye contact.
  - Give the students enough time to respond.
- Use cooperative teaching strategies to:
  - create a feeling of belonging
  - develop self-esteem
  - help the students understand and appreciate the differences between themselves and others
  - foster interdependency.

The class environment is also very important. A rich and stimulating environment must be created.

- Physical aspects of the classroom
  - Post written French in the classroom (Make sure there are no mistakes in the French!)
    - word list drawn up with the students' help
    - graphic organizer
    - various instructions
    - posters indicating the approach to follow
  - Rearrange the desks to encourage the students to work in small groups
  - Provide a wide variety of written documents: brochures, journals, books, newspapers, advertisements, comic strips
  - Make sound recordings and other kinds of recordings available.

How to help overcome frustration

(The following text is translated and adapted from *L'immersion en français au Canada: guide pratique d'enseignement*, 2004, with the permission of CAIT.)

Late immersion students are particularly characterized by the frustration and stress they experience when the school year begins. Here are a few ideas that will help teachers provide their students with a supportive environment as soon as they start school. The teachers must:

- remember that the students want and need to express ideas that go far beyond their limited linguistic skills; teachers must speak to the students respectfully and reassuringly
- value the students' capacity to overcome frustration; recognize the gap between the quality of their ideas and the vocabulary available to them
- explain to the students that it is important to tolerate a certain amount of ambiguity without getting frustrated
- teach the students how to negotiate the meaning of a message: predict, infer, deduce from the context, even guess at its meaning, instead of trying to understand everything
- encourage the students to suggest hypotheses and verify them, thus to take risks
- encourage the students to understand that mistakes are part of risk-taking and thus part of learning.

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- follow the scaffolding principle as much as possible:
  - encourage the students to communicate at a level that is slightly higher than their present level; give them clear, direct support
  - once the students have acquired new strategies, offer support when necessary
  - let the students use their new knowledge autonomously
  - choose the next challenge, one a bit above the present level
  - continue this process, showing the students how quickly and how well they are making progress.

Teachers are aware that students must meet serious challenges. They are sensitive to the students' anxiety. They strive to reassure the students who are worried or lost and make them feel secure.

To reassure the students who must navigate in an as yet unexplored language, the teachers should:

- recognize that the students must have confidence in themselves and in their own capabilities
- identify and emphasize the students' strong points
- choose topics according to the students' personal needs or use the students' personal experiences as a basis for building a solid, effective curriculum
- give the students all the time they need; recognize that some students need more time than others, not because they are less capable, but because of their learning style
- during oral activities, allow the students to speak to a classmate or a small group rather than in front of the whole class.

Students should understand the development of their own learning, recognize and celebrate each small success or bit of progress and see that they are on the path to success. It is also important for teachers to value these same individual or class successes.

How to succeed during the first three months

The first three months of late immersion are critical to offering students as many tools as possible: in other words, emphasis is placed on the language *in all the subjects taught in French*. Students must be able to communicate in French; they must not only listen or read but also produce. They must learn strategies for finding the answers to their questions concerning the language and the content. Teachers must focus on learning French as a language of communication and on learning second-language strategies.

Students entering late immersion have already developed strategies in elementary school. The majority of students know how school works. Their literacy skills are fairly developed. Therefore, emphasis must be placed on listening to a second language (students have to train their ear) and on oral production and communication. Reading and writing skills that are essential to learning a second language are taught at the same time, but less time can be spent on them during the first few months.

Orientation

It would be beneficial to get the youngsters together for a few hours, a few days or even a week (camp) before they begin late immersion so that they can get to know each other and feel comfortable with their decision to enter late immersion. This would also be a good time to give them expressions that they will find useful and necessary for starting the French program. The first two or three weeks are also critical. The teachers should coordinate their efforts and plan the grammatical concepts, vocabulary and topics together. They should also communicate with each other daily to get to know and understand their

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students better, thus assuring their success. The teacher will establish a classroom routine and define what is expected from the students. The teacher must also introduce a list of sentences or the vocabulary in the context of the class. The students should learn these sentences so that they can cope during the first few days.

The teacher can also introduce the available resources (manuals, technological resources, lists of key sentences or vocabulary) so that the students can find answers to their questions. A number of teachers use gestures and facial expressions and bring objects on the first few days of class.

a. Personal attitudes toward the first three months

The outcome is better when the immersion is complete and intensive from the beginning. Teachers have to emphasize the teaching of French and the students' oral production. They must be confident that the students are able to learn at a good pace. Students are also able to learn complex sentences if they repeat them every day. We begin with easy sentences that are repeated often, then add more complex sentences. This should be done from the first few days on.

b. How can we help students during the first three months?

To help students acquire the language, we have to build on key sentences or established structures. For example, we start with sentences such as:

1. *Comment t'appelles-tu?* (What is your name?)
2. *Où est mon crayon?* (Where is my pencil?)

We then move on to more complex sentences such as:

1. *Est-ce que je peux aller aux toilettes?* (May I go to the bathroom?) *Oui, tu peux aller.* (Yes, you may go.)
2. *Est-ce que je peux manger mon sandwich?* (May I eat my sandwich?)
3. *Combien coûte ce manteau?* (How much does this coat cost?)
4. *Qui est le premier minister du Canada?* (Who is the prime minister of Canada?)

The expression "*Est-ce que je peux aller...*" can later become "*Puis-je...*", "*Est-ce que tu veux...*", "*Est-ce que je dois...*" Thus it is not necessary to wait before teaching the verbs *pouvoir*, *devoir* and *vouloir*; they are already part of these sentences. It is the vocabulary that changes. The essential linguistic material should be written on multicoloured cardboard cards and posted on the walls in thematic and dialogic configurations: the sentences appear in short, coherent sequences, the questions with possible responses, statements followed by exclamatory, often emotive, comments, etc. This display progresses and changes with the teaching. Meaningful images can be added.

These series of sentences must be reviewed in a context and in a communicative fashion every day, and these sentences must become increasingly complex. The students repeat the sentences. Then they change the vocabulary and inject emotion into these sentences, using them to tell their own stories or to invent stories according to their own interests. When the sentences have been acquired on the oral level, they can be read at home. It is important to speak the students' language and to use humour.

The teachers must also incorporate visual aids into the input, but the importance must be placed on the students' oral production. The teachers should communicate these sentences by using objects and gestures. However, it is the students who use the sentences. Oral practice must take up 80% of the class time, whether it is in social studies, French or mathematics. The students use the sentences

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modelled by the teacher and then create their own sentences. This way, they learn useful sentences and then use them to produce other sentences on their own.

c. Lesson planning

When the teachers plan the curriculum for the first three months, and for the whole year as well, they must maintain the strictest reliability with respect to the structure, vocabulary, and complexity of the language used in the texts (dialogues, instructions, plays, riddles, stories, descriptions, explanations, etc.) and with respect to the students' oral and written work. The language learned should be found in each new unit (section) so that it is cumulative and combined with new elements. The learners will feel secure with a progression that respects and develops their ability to remember.

At the beginning of the first week, the teachers must provide the students with sentences so that they can communicate clearly and precisely in daily oral activities. These sentences should be repeated every day and integrated into specific contexts. They are always related to what the students have to learn in the designated subject. For example, in social studies, the teachers can teach the students to say key sentences that they will need for a new topic. They can plan a lesson for orally learning sentences by using games, skits and vignettes and, in doing so, can introduce concepts through these oral activities. Again, the important thing is getting the students to speak. If the teachers want to give the students a series of statements to copy from the board on a subject that they have to know, the students must have already discussed them or at least have started by producing them orally. This way, the students will retain more of what they have learned and, most importantly, they will learn to speak in French.

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A practical example

During the first three months, the focus must be put on learning sentences in which the verb is central. The necessary vocabulary will be built around these verbs. Frequently used verbs must be chosen from all the conjugation groups so that several models are created. In the beginning, use only singular forms (including the pronoun "*on*"); after a certain time, the encoding is established and the 3rd person plural can be added. The pronouns "*nous*" and "*vous*" will be introduced only after several hours of practice.

For example:

Je mange une pomme. (I am eating an apple.)
Tu manges des bananes. (You are eating bananas.)

Once these sentences are learned, we can add negative expressions to the sentences

Je ne mange pas une pomme. (I am not eating an apple.)
Tu ne manges pas une banane. (You are not eating a banana.)

and change the pronouns for more complex subjects.

Chantal mange une poire. (Chantal is eating a pear.) (a vocabulary list will already be developed as a visual aid)

Then the sentences become more complex, for example:

Chantal ne veut pas une pomme. (Chantal doesn't want an apple.)
Est-ce que tu veux une pomme? (Do you want an apple?)
Non, je ne veux pas une pomme. (No, I don't want an apple.)

Here, the verb *vouloir* (to want) was integrated without the youngsters knowing that it is a verb from the third group. The key expression "*Est-ce que tu...*" (Do you...) was also introduced.

At this point, time must also be spent on the gender of nouns. If the student says,
"*Je veux un pomme.*", the teacher must immediately stop and model, "*Je veux une pomme.*"

The following sentences can also be added once the others have been learned:

Chantal veut son manteau. (Chantal wants her coat.)
Est-ce que tu veux ton manteau? (Do you want your coat?)

Here, possessive adjectives were introduced into sentences that the students already know.
The concepts are thus added in increasing complexity. It is very important that, every day, students have the chance to practice, in context, the grammatical concepts and the vocabulary that were introduced during the first three months. In the beginning, they will practise them orally; they will then integrate them into communication and writing activities. Discussing them explicitly is also good, but the important thing is for the students to produce certain expressions automatically. If necessary, they can return to the expressions or sentences that require more practice.

Note: For mathematics, the sciences and social studies, teachers can adapt this kind of approach to learning expressions that are common to the subject.

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During the first three months, the students should be able to:

1. express themselves using short sentences or tell a short story by using the sentences they have learned.
2. use all the basic interrogative forms so that they can ask questions in a variety of communicative situations.
3. slowly gain confidence in themselves and in their ability to handle new situations.
4. communicate nonverbally, but especially verbally. This verbal communication was modelled by the teacher and regularly practised in different communicative contexts.
5. talk about both tangible and imaginary things. All students should have the opportunity to speak French in all their classes every day.
6. demonstrate average language comprehension.
7. speak with other students in French (interaction, communication, discussion). The teacher may lead the discussion in the beginning, but as soon as the students have acquired the key sentences, they will produce other sentences by themselves.
8. use communication tools and strategies, know how to look for and find answers.
9. find the general meaning of what is said in class or what they read.

In order for students to continue to improve their linguistic abilities, we must continue to emphasize the points mentioned after the first three months. Furthermore, we must give the students strategies (and key sentences) so that they can think about more complex issues (problem solving, critical thinking about subjects). Vocabulary lists are presented in class only to support the sentence structures that have already been learned. This way, students will adjust their vocabulary according to the situation. For example:

1. *Je mange une pomme.* (I am eating an apple.) The student can say: *Je mange un sandwich.* (I am eating a sandwich.)

   or

2. *Mon artiste préféré s'appelle* _____. (The name of my favourite artist is _____.) The student can have fun changing the person's name.

Finally, if the teachers focus on oral skills and on learning essential French sentences, the students will acquire the content of the subject matter much more easily. Reading, writing and oral comprehension will also have their place but only after the students have communicated in French.

The following section presents a detailed overview of teaching in late immersion.

Details of an overview of the approximate progress during the first year in late immersion (by Sylvia Csorba)

This section presents the details of the progress made during the first year. (Also see Appendices 1 and 2 for a structured overview.)

From September to December:

Content and statements

Dialogue-centred exercises enable students to introduce themselves to other people and talk about their preferences in areas such as recreation, food, family, friends, school subjects, animals, the media, trips, clothes, etc. These topics will not be explored successively, but they will often appear simultaneously in

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verb-centred action narratives. The students will ask many questions that will particularly help them to cope in the classroom, learn and understand more and establish relationships with the teacher and their classmates. Their dialogues will be enriched with expressions that will help them navigate the classroom, the school's physical environment, their neighbourhood and the macrogeography of their city. They will also be able to locate themselves in time (the hour, the calendar, the seasons) and describe the weather. After the first few weeks, they will be able to read short stories that increase in length from several lines to a full page. These narratives reflect the language and structures learned. They will help students learn the expressions used to describe the physical appearance of people and a few of their typical personality traits as well as some of the objects in their immediate environment. These texts and their manipulations (dialogues, games, readers' theatre, explanations, skits, various reconstructions, dramatizations, role-playing) will introduce the students to the narrative style of action stories and the production of short, verb-driven paragraphs. Students will use a fairly large number of sentences and expressions to express their emotions and opinions and to agree, question, ask for help and clarification, request permission, admire, console, reassure, suggest, refuse, deny and analyze. Throughout the process, Francophone cultural references will be taken into account.

Type of language

It is characterized by a frequently used, unspecialized vocabulary that cultivates a communicative interpersonal discourse taken from daily life and often resembles the students' dialect. Several stock phrases taken from formulaic language will be used, especially in the beginning. They will be integrated into the language of the analytic construction (governed by the rules of grammar) that is taught and simultaneously repeated.

Learning, approach and competencies

The input will be explicit and made understandable through the context and nonverbal clues. There will be as much attention paid to the form as to the message. The teacher models the language in an interactive and systematic way. The new linguistic elements will be reintroduced in each new unit and combined with the new input. There will be thematic links among the units. The students' production is carefully coached and scaffolded, taking into account their different learning styles. The students learn individually, in groups and in activity centres. The progression will always be characterized by inductive reasoning. The approach varies between a style centred on the teacher and one centred on the students. From the first week on, students work on comprehension, listening, oral production, reading and writing.

Structures

- the identification of correlations between the phonemes and their written expressions
- the alphabet and some pronunciation rules
- progressive learning of how to conjugate the present tense of frequently used verbs, including a few pronominal and auxiliary verbs
- agreement of subject and verb
- the concept of gender and number applied to personal pronouns, articles, possessive and predicate adjectives
- the construction of simple affirmative, interrogative and negative sentences
- the most common interrogative pronouns
- a few prepositions of place and their modifications according to gender and number
- a few prepositions of time
- the concept of the infinitive within the context of the construction with infinitive, and its use in forming the "*futur proche*" (near future tense)
- adverbs of time and place and their placement in the sentence.

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Strategies

- inferring the meaning of a word on the basis of context and nonverbal clues
- knowing how to infer the meaning of a word from similar words or words having the same origin in English
- inferring the spelling from the pronunciation and vice versa
- knowing how to construct sentences with a structure similar to that of the models provided
- knowing how to identify the conjugation group of a conjugated verb
- beginning to identify the parts of speech and their function
- knowing how to make hypothetical predictions about the modification of new lexical elements
- starting to understand syntactical constants
- starting to use a dictionary
- knowing how to negotiate linguistic capacity with a partner or in a group
- knowing how to transfer learned sentences and expressions to social communication
- self-correcting with or without negotiation initiated by the teacher.

From January to March:

Content and statements

The content and statements from the first term will be reintroduced in other contexts. The students will be able to communicate and express themselves in a more detailed and varied way in the same fields but in more complicated situations. Other fields are added, including commercial transactions, shopping, food and a few festive and social occasions. The format of the literary form will be the verb-centred, communication-oriented action narrative. The topics will be incorporated in a natural way; they will no longer be systematically explored. The vocabulary and language will be richer and more expressive, and the students will be much more at ease in all the competencies, particularly in their oral skills. They will use many sentences and expressions automatically. The expressive strength of statements learned in the first term will be increased through the acquisition of more sophisticated structures. The students will understand more quickly and will express themselves with more confidence. They will easily read longer texts of up to two or three pages, which may sometimes contain ambiguities in language and content. The formats will be more varied: post cards, letters, recipes, holiday greetings, messages, riddles and poetry are added to the textual forms already explored. The manipulations of previously learned texts will be more demanding in terms of what will stimulate the students' creativity and independence and the complexity of the language. All the basic structures learned will become more elaborate and will be repeated at a more advanced level. The students will learn to express themselves in the past tense and to use temporal adverbs. Communication will always be guided but, much more often, will be negotiated and somewhat more spontaneous. The students will converse more with each other to satisfy their social and emotional needs. The Francophone cultural environment will be reflected in the texts and the use of the language in all aspects of teaching.

Type of language

It is always characterized by frequently used, verb-centred language and is taken from daily life, but it is a little more flexible because of a repertoire of structures and an enriched vocabulary. The style of the written texts is always oriented toward action, oral expression and communication. The contexts draw on the students' daily life, social life and imagination. Formulas are still used, but creative construction governed by the rules of grammar takes precedence.

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Learning, approach and competencies

(See the first term.) More varied and demanding writing formats are added. Students will practise scaffolded or independent writing more frequently. Oral practice combined with the practice of new structures and lexical components will always take up the greatest part of the lessons. However, the goal of this practice is always communication.

Structures
To the structures learned and practised during the first term, we add:

- learning and continued practice of conjugations
- the past perfect with "*avoir*" and "*être*"
- the use of temporal adverbs linked to the present, the near future and the past
- expressions of quantity and measure with the partitive article
- negation with "*ne plus de,*" "*ne jamais*" and "*ne rien*"
- the use of the indefinite article after the negation and the partitive article
- the use of the pronouns (complement of direct and indirect objects) "*me*" and "*te*" ("*m*" and "*t*").

Strategies
(See the first term.) To those learned in the first term, we add and highlight the following strategies:

- continuing to identify and understand the parts of speech and their function
- continuing to identify the syntactical constants
- knowing how to use various resources (grammar books, modeled exercises, verb dictionary, texts, notes, etc.)
- using more extensive self-correction based on structural knowledge
- transferring statement models and sentences found in texts to creative production
- correctly modifying and adapting models
- transferring structural models and their modifications to new lexical components (especially in conjugation)
- knowing how to identify the principal ideas and themes in a paragraph
- knowing how to identify the elements of a story's plot
- knowing how to summarize paragraphs
- knowing how to handle longer and more complicated texts with greater ease
- knowing how to initiate and maintain conversations and discussions with greater ease
- knowing how to negotiate dialogues more independently, including some unforeseeable elements
- knowing how to use a dictionary more efficiently, thanks to a more advanced understanding of the parts of speech.

From April to June:

Content and statements

The content and statements from the previous terms will be reintroduced in new contexts and situations in a cumulative way. We will add the following fields: fashion, tourism, restaurants and cafés, the family home, and problems and conflicts experienced by adolescents in society. We will take Francophone cultural references into account in all fields. The verb-centred, communication-oriented action or adventure story format will still serve as the model and the source for different adaptations and transformations in all the competencies. The thematic fields mentioned above will appear in a naturally integrated way but will not be subjected to exploration or specialization. The framework of the narrative, adventure story or play will take precedence, and the thematic elements will be used according to the demands of the situations and the plot. The texts will be longer (up to about four pages) and more complex. The students will find it easy to identify with the protagonists and scenarios; they will draw on

these texts to recreate situations and storylines that parallel their own lives. They will begin to discuss the social problems dealt with in these texts during scaffolded debates. We will add exclamations, commands, orders, directives (in the imperative) and comparisons to the types of statements learned earlier. We will add "how to" material, advertisements, itineraries and menus to the textual formats already learned. Written and oral comprehension improves. Independent production in the two competencies becomes easier. However, to be able to produce with a certain quality by using their prior knowledge, the students still need many models, a cumulative progression and well-organized scaffolding. At the completion of these "itineraries," their independent production will be more successful. The students use many expressions and sentences automatically.

Type of language

A high-frequency, unspecialized, verb-centred language inspired by daily life is always used, but it is much more flexible and expressive because of the repertoire of structures and vocabulary that has been accumulated and enriched during the year. The contexts will be more complex and varied and will refer to the students' daily, social and imaginary life; they will be brought to life in skits, dialogues, discussions and simple, scaffolded debates. Formulas (often idiomatic) are always part of the discourse: the students begin to integrate parts of them into whole sentences fashioned from their creative constructions, which are governed by the structural rules.

Learning, approach and competencies

(See the previous terms.) On the basis of texts with more complex content, students learn to take part in discussions and scaffolded debates that sometimes lead to spontaneous dialogues with unexpected elements that must be negotiated. The students will pay as much attention to the message as to the form with respect to the input of new linguistic elements. The teacher will make an effort to structure and manipulate the input of interactive and contextual practice so that the students avoid errors in their production (output).

Structures

To the structures learned and practised during the previous terms, we add:

- the broadening of the use of the past perfect with "*avoir*" and "*être*"
- the continuation of conjugation practice
- the imperative
- the position of the attributive adjective
- the comparison of qualifying adjectives and the kinds of sentences that result from them.

Strategies

To the strategies learned during the previous terms, we add:

- the handling of longer, more complex texts
- the students' ability to relate social problems observed in their reading to their personal context
- the ability to learn to make arguments and to carry on simple debates based on textual information and personal experience.

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Other factors that contribute to success

(The following text is adapted from the *Handbook for French Immersion Administrators*, 2002.)

Certain students face challenges in the late immersion program just as some do in the English program. Sometimes these challenges are simply linked to the student's maturity or to the frustration of the gifted student who is used to understanding quickly and easily. The student may even have learning disorders or a behaviour problem. The teacher must try to identify the problems that present themselves as soon as possible and find ways to resolve them within the context of the late immersion program. Alberta Education offers a document titled *Inclusion en immersion. Guide de différenciation pédagogique pour répondre aux divers besoins d'apprentissage*. The PDF document is found at <http://education.alberta.ca/media/720116/inclusionweb.pdf>. The following sections present a short report on certain students' special needs.

What we know about learning disabilities with respect to late immersion

Students with learning disabilities can distinguish themselves from their Anglophone milieu by becoming bilingual. In doing so, they gain a feeling of self-confidence and success that they would not have if they were in a regular program. To date, the knowledge and the assessment tools do not allow us to predict the "specific ability" to succeed in a late immersion program. However, experienced researchers and teachers have prepared a preliminary guide in which they have collected observations, conclusions and advice on the subject. *Students with learning disabilities will succeed as well in a late immersion program as they would in an English-language program, providing they have access to the same support services as a student in the English-language program.* In reality, most of these students' needs can be met within the framework of a late immersion program, allowing them to benefit from learning a second language. Nevertheless, there are some circumstances in which choosing a late immersion program for these students is not recommended.

The late immersion program does not cause learning disorders. In fact, some research indicates that learning a second language will enhance these students' learning. (See *Yes, You Can Help!* Appendix A, pp. 34–36.) All students who experience difficulties should receive help, preferably in French. Nevertheless, if help is not available in French, the student can receive help in English without leaving the immersion program.

For the students to be successful, there must be a plan in place to help them overcome their difficulties, rather than transferring them to an English program. Naturally, if a student is to receive help, the difficulties must be identified, and a plan must be developed and followed so that the student receives proper guidance.

Procedure to follow in case of learning disabilities

First step:

- It is obvious that there is a problem.

This first step leads to:

1. an initial conversation with the student and the parents
2. an appropriate in-class intervention and a collection of data
3. official discussions with the teachers and a frequent reassessment of the student's cumulative school record.

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If the problems persist, the teacher concerned makes an official request asking for the collaboration of the teaching team.

Second step – Possible intervention:

A collaboration of the teaching team.

- Sharing collected information and data as well as an analysis of the student's initial results.
- Identification of strengths and their use in the development of the intervention methods.
- Start interventions.
- Decide if there is a need to modify or adapt the curriculums' general and specific expectations.
- Assure a continuous follow-up of the student.

Third step:

- Review the outcome of the interventions and the teaching team's adaptations.
- Determine if any other modifications or adaptations to the curriculum's general expectations are needed.
- Identify the student's future assessment needs, including the complete psychometric assessment, if possible.
- Repetition of the first and second steps with systematic support, reviews and assessments.

Remember:

1. to proceed judiciously and gradually
2. to establish realistic goals and reassess them
3. to always try to answer the question: "What must the student, the teacher, the parent do?"
4. to involve the students as much as possible in their learning experience, and remember that it is important to celebrate their successes and use their strengths as much as possible in order to lessen their inadequacy in the program.

Gifted students

- Gifted children learn more quickly than others and in different ways.
- Different teaching strategies must be used in order to make them think at a high level, engage them in demanding and stimulating tasks, allow them to give free rein to their creativity and respect their need to advance quickly.
- Gifted children who are not challenged will not do their best work because they lack stimulation: there are not enough engaging creative activities, the pace is slower and the critical thinking process is not sophisticated enough.
- Gifted students who lack stimulation may develop behaviour problems or learning difficulties.
- Gifted students should not be given more work. Instead, their work should entail greater challenges that require a different cognitive approach.

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Supplementary information and Web sites

This section provides a brief list of resources that give some ideas about activities that can be used in late immersion as well as some Web sites that may be of interest to teachers.

Educational activities

1. *Journal de l'immersion. Dossier : Coup d'œil sur l'immersion tardive*, Ottawa: L'Association canadienne des professeurs d'immersion, Vol. 28, No. 2, Spring 2006, pp. 8–19.
   This issue of the *Journal de l'immersion* offers a series of examples of learning situations. You can access the journal at the following address:
   <http://acpi-cait.ca/pdf/journaux/V28N2.pdf> (consulted September 4, 2008)

2. The LearnAlberta Web site, <http://www.learnalberta.ca>, also offers a wide variety of resources.

3. The *Canadian Modern Language Review* is also a good resource. The errors most often made in immersion are discussed in the following issue: Besnard, Christine. *Touch of ... Class! Synthèse des 50 erreurs les plus courantes à l'écrit : Pour une approche fonctionnelle de la langue* (*A Synopsis of the 50 Most Common Writing Errors: For a Functional Language Approach*) *Canadian Modern Language Review*, Vol. 51, No. 2, 1995, pp. 348–356.

Other resources

Canadian Parents for French
<http://www.cpf.ca>

La Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française
<http://www.fjcf.ca>

La francophonie canadienne
<http://www.franco.ca>

Association canadienne des professeurs d'immersion
<http://www.acpi-cait.ca> This association publishes the *Journal de l'immersion*

Association canadienne des professeurs de langues secondes
<http://www.caslt.org> This association publishes the journal *Réflexions*.

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Glossary

Unless otherwise indicated, the French definitions of the words included in this glossary come from the *Dictionnaire de didactique du français langue étrangère et seconde*, under the direction of Jean-Pierre Cuq, Paris, CLE International. Please note that although this dictionary often refers to the term "foreign language," the term "second language" will be used more often so as to reflect the Canadian context.

Allophones: The term is used to categorize a population that speaks an "other" language. In Québec, it designates immigrant students who must have specific instruction before integrating the normal teaching structures. Replacing the imprecision of the term "foreigner," it underscores the linguistic difference rather than the linguistic and cultural affiliation.

Equibilingualism: Concerns an individual who has equal proficiency in two languages. This is very difficult to achieve.

Focus on form: Particular attention is paid to the form of statements produced by those learning grammar as such (Cuq, 2003, p.102).

Input or exposure: Refers to the learner's language environment, that to which the learner is exposed.

Knowledge (declarative, procedural and conditional): According to cognitive psychology: declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge. Declarative knowledge answers the question "what?" and refers to the things a person knows or understands. Procedural knowledge answers the question "how?" and refers to know-how. Conditional knowledge deals with the questions "when?" and "why?" and refers to the understanding (recognition) of conditions where knowledge and know-how are used. These three types of knowledge each have their role to play in the transfer of language proficiency because they act simultaneously in reading and writing. Reading and writing require recourse to the three types of knowledge: knowledge or understanding, know-how and the recognition of situations or conditions. If an individual does not recognize a past participle in a sentence, it will be impossible to make the necessary agreement, even if the rule is known by heart.

Language proficiency: This includes all the knowledge and know-how that the individual can call upon in a situation requiring comprehension or language production (Simard, 1997, p. 70).

Literacy: Masny (2001) defined literacy as a social construct that includes the words, gestures, attitudes, identities or, more precisely, the manners of speaking, reading, writing and attributing value "in brief, a way of being in the world…" Literacies include values. They often overlap with elements related to religion, gender, race, culture, identity, ideologies and power. When we speak, write or read, we construct meaning by relying on a specific context. More precisely, the act of constructing meaning that we define as "literacy" is integrated into the culture and into the sociopolitical and sociohistorical features of a society and its institutions. The meaning of literacy is operationalized or actualized from a specific context in the time and space where it is found and where it functions (Masny, 2001, pp. 16–17).

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Mother tongue: This is the first language the speaker acquires in a context where it is also the language used for communication (Cuq, 2003, pp. 150-151). In the Canadian context, "mother tongue" refers to the first language the child learns at home and still understands. Students may also have learned two or more languages at the same time. Adapted on July 17 from the Statistics Canada Web site. <http:// www.statcan.gc.ca/concepts/definitions/language-langue-eng.htm#a1>

Zone of proximal development: This is the distance between the youngsters' actual development and what they can achieve with the help of an expert, either a teacher or another student. (Vygotsky 1978)

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of approximate progress during the first year in late immersion

(The following text is translated and adapted from *Programme d'études. Français 7e à la 9e année. Immersion tardive*, November 2002, with the permission from the Nova Scotia Department of Education and from *Français—Immersion tardive 6 et 7*, 1999, with the permission from the British Columbia Ministry of Education.)

From September to December	From January to March	From April to June
Listen a lot and produce key sentences that have been learned with the teacher's help.	Express themselves using learned sentences and start to produce them.	Use longer sentences and use them to form new ones.
Take some risks with the teacher's guidance.	Take more risks.	Feel more comfortable taking risks.
Show a certain insecurity with respect to their lack of language comprehension but slowly gain self-confidence.	Feel more at ease in new situations.	Can handle several different situations.
Use a great deal of nonverbal communication and their knowledge of their first language to "guess" what the teacher is saying and to produce short sentences.	Start to correct themselves.	Can surpass the established assessment standards.
A limited oral comprehension; approximate meaning.	A fairly good understanding of oral and written messages in short, simple sentences.	A good understanding of oral and written messages that are increasingly complex; can produce texts based on familiar situations.
Spontaneously try to start talking to the other students in French.	Improve their ability to speak spontaneously with other students in French.	Show a certain confidence and pride in being able to use French.
Get used to the sounds of the language and to the class's daily routines.	Know the class's daily routines.	Work independently.
Develop research, working and scanning techniques. Begin small projects with the teacher's guidance.	Develop more research, working and scanning techniques. Do bigger projects with the teacher's guidance.	Can complete research projects, drawing information from French books in a more autonomous way.
Accustom their ear to the sounds of the French language.	Continue to accustom their ear to the sounds of the French language.	Develop a certain familiarity with the sounds and rhythm of the French language.
With the teacher's help, start to become familiar with the words that express emotions and feelings.	Start to explore other ways to express themselves, such as the dramatic arts, and integrate technology into their learning.	Can put on little skits and other productions that deal with the more playful aspects of the language and its variants.

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Appendix 2: Overview of students' approximate capabilities at different stages during the second year of late immersion

(The following text is translated and adapted from *Programme d'études. Français 7e à la 9e année. Immersion tardive*, November 2002, with the permission of the Nova Scotia Department of Education and from *Français—Immersion tardive 6 et 7*, 1999, with the permission of the British Columbia Ministry of Education.)

During the first few months, all the teachers of all subjects should review last year's notions of the French language. The students will have lost a little of their French during the summer vacation. The focus should therefore be on oral production. Teachers subsequently continue to offer the students opportunities not only to speak the language but also to write, understand and listen to it. The second year in late immersion is as important as the first. Some students have not acquired the French language skills.

From September to January	**From February to June**
After a quick review of what they saw in Grade 7, the students rapidly assimilate the information.	Feel much more able to spontaneously express themselves in French.
Can express emotions and ideas in French.	Can express and explain emotions and ideas.
Can read and understand complex French texts to respond to their needs with respect to information and imagination.	Can read and understand more specialized French texts to respond to their needs with respect to information and imagination.
Can complete more complex tasks.	Can use different means of French expression (videos, dramatic productions, etc.) in their tasks, but in a more advanced way than in the first year.

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Appendix 3: Teaching a strategy explicitly

(The following text is translated and adapted from *Enseigner aux élèves ayant des troubles d'apprentissage*, 2001, Alberta Education.)

It is important to teach the students learning strategies when they are coping with new skills, using skills they already have and trying to resolve problems or complete tasks. The students' progress depends on their ability to use the strategies independently and to apply them to new situations. All students, including those with learning disabilities, can benefit from the strategies, advice and techniques presented here. Students can use the strategies in their various classes throughout their studies and their lives. This example is taken from Alberta Education's *Enseigner aux élèves ayant des troubles d'apprentissage* (2001). This document includes several concrete examples of strategies that can help ALL students. Consult the examples at <http://education.alberta.ca/media/620057/partie_c.pdf> (accessed November 4, 2008).

Teaching strategies involves several important stages. In particular, the teacher must prepare carefully, give explanations and present explicit models. The students must always have the opportunity to put the strategies into practice, and this practice must be guided. The responsibility for using strategies can then be passed from the teacher to the student. The following components will contribute to the students' acquisition and use of strategies.

Components of a lesson on strategies

Preparing for learning

- Determine the skills needed for learning a new strategy and teach these skills.
- Brainstorm to find strategies that help solve a problem. This will provide the opportunity to determine how students approach problems: it will also give them the chance to analyze the effectiveness of their strategies. Once the students are able to generate their own strategies, they will be more likely to use them regularly and effectively than if someone else imposed strategies on them.
- Describe the purpose of the strategy.
- Give an example to illustrate when and in which situations the strategy can be used.
- Make sure that the student is committed to learning the strategy.

Teaching the strategy

- Describe the strategy.
- Discuss the importance of the strategy.
- Model the strategy's steps.
- Teach the strategy's steps. (Note: If you are teaching a complicated strategy that involves several steps, it might be more effective to divide the strategy into lessons, model the steps, repeat the steps and practise one step at a time.)
- During the modelling, explain each step's rationale to the students.
- Ask the students questions about the strategy.
- Have the students repeat the steps.
- Have the students practise using the strategy in diverse situations.
- While the students are practising using the strategy, give them precise feedback.
- Give students indicators they can trust so that they can determine when to use the strategy, in other words, to make the transfer.

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Integration and implementation

- Use the strategy with the students.
- Ask the students to use the strategy.
- Review the indicators that the students can trust to determine when they should use the strategy.
- Review the steps of the strategy.
- Let the students use the strategy and guide them until they are using it correctly.
- Continue giving precise feedback.
- Show the parents and teacher's aides how to use the strategy.
- Give the students assignments in which this strategy proves useful.
- Oversee the students' use of the strategy.

Learning summary

- Ask the students to note the situations in which they used the strategy.
- Do a review lesson regarding the use of the strategy.
- Discuss how this strategy will be carried over to the next strategy so that the students can see the continuity and generalize the strategies.

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